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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA — 663 DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. February 3, 1954

REF : Embassy's Despatch No. 653, February 1, 1954

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SUBJECT: Fate of Guatemalans Arrested in Connection with Supposed Anti-Government Plot

To complete the record, there is set forth below what is known here about the Guatemalans arrested in the days preceding the Guatemalan Government's January 29 statement announcing that a plot by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas and General Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes to overthrow the Arbenz Administration had been uncovered.

Still in Prison. Major Enrique Trinidad Oliva Quintana, retired, the first person arrested in the police round-up, is still so far as known in jail, as are Colonel Saturnino Barrera, retired, and José María Ticas, radio technician at the Guatemala City Base Militar. The Government's statement made no charges against Major Oliva or Colonel Barrera. Ticas was accused of having drawn up a plan of the Guatemalan Government's radio facilities on the promise of $2,000 from Horacio de Córdova and Roberto Vizcaíno Rubio, the anti-Communist radio-program director and radio-station owner. The fate of Enrique Coronado, Secretary, Ramiro Aguilar, Treasurer, and Miguel Quiroa, of the Unión de Trabajadores Libres (UNTL), the anti-Communist labor association, has not been made public, and they are presumed to remain in police custody.

Expelled to Mexico. According to an Associated Press despatch from Mexico, the following were expelled to Tapachula, Mexico, and were sent to the hospital there for treatment for injuries they said they received while being questioned by the Guatemalan police: Rubén Villatoro, President of the Union de Trabajadores Libres (UNTL); Horacio de Córdova, director of the "La Hora Anticommunista" radio program; Jorge Palacios, the son-in-law of Colonel Alfredo Castañeda exiled for subversive activity during the Arévalo Administration; and Guillermo Davíla Córdova. The local press has likewise reported that these people were expelled to Mexico, an act which incidentally appears in violation of their rights under Article 25 of the Constitution which provides that "No Guatemalan may be expatriated [i.e., put out of the country], prohibited entrance to the territory of the Republic, or denied a passport or other documents of identification." Villatoro's family has charged that he was put across the border without documents and that money and other personal

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effects taken from him by the police had not been returned.

It has also been reported, but not confirmed, that José Maria Guzman, until recently editor of La Oposición, was put across the Mexican border.

In the Government's statement on the supposed plot, Guillermo Davila Cordova was identified as Ydigoras Fuentes' personal representative in Guatemala while Horacio de Cordova was accused of offering $2,000 to Ticas for the radio plan which was sent to Castillo Armas. Fernandez was charged with complicity, including an intention to fly an unnamed deputy to Nicaragua. (The deputy is understood to be José Luis Arenas, of the Partido Unificación Anticomunista; the Government has not yet released his name but the Administration deputies in Congress are considering passing a motion requesting the Minister of the Interior to give it to them.)

Expelled to Honduras. The local press has reported that Roberto Vizcaíno Rubio, owner and director of Radio Continental, has been expelled across the Honduran border. His family was cited as the source. Vizcaíno was accused in the Government statement of having, together with Horacio de Córdova, offered Ticas the $2,000 for the radio plan.

Refugees in Foreign Embassies. Miguel Camacho Labbé and Luis Beltranena Valladares, the anticommunist Guatemala City municipal councillors, who took refuge in the Salvadoran Embassy, left for El Salvador with a Guatemalan Safe Conduct on January 28, and Beltranena made a strong statement from there against what he considered the unwarranted police persecution to which he had been subjected. Camacho was accused in the Government statement of being Castillo Armas's personal representative in Guatemala but Beltranena was only charged with sending letters through Camacho to his uncle, Luis Valladares y Aycinena, the PUA Secretary General who went into exile last fall.

Carlos Gándara Durán, the ex-newspaperman who took refuge in the Nicaraguan Embassy, left for Nicaragua on January 29. He was accused in the Government statement of enlisting in the Castillo Armas group.

Meanwhile, Otto Samayoa Géron, businessman and former manager of the weekly La Epoca, took refuge in the Mexican Embassy after the Government statement accused him of complicity in the supposed plot. The Foreign Ministry has issued a safe-conduct for him to leave the country.

Released. Roberto Castillo Sinibaldi, director of Radio Ciro, and Oscar Berger, cashier of the Guatemalan Institute of Social Security, have been released. The former, according to the Government statement, was questioned about a proposition made to

him to recruit five radio technicians and confessed his part. The latter was apparently arrested in error when he called at Camacho's residence in connection with a dress that his wife was having fixed there.

William L. Krieg
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim